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Miss Joan Burdett, Chairman  
Vassar Political Association  
Vassar College  
Poughkeepsie, New York

Dear Miss Burdett:

Upon returning from a trip to Europe, your letter of 6 September inviting me to be the keynote speaker at your 1958 Conference on 5 December has been brought to my attention.

I sincerely regret that I am unable to accept your very kind invitation. In view of my duties, it has been necessary to restrict my speaking engagements to the Government Service Schools with an infrequent outside address. Unfortunately, I cannot make an additional commitment at this time.

Your thoughtfulness in asking me to attend on this particular occasion is indeed appreciated and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success at the Conference.

Once again, many thanks and kindest regards.

Sincerely,

Allen W. Dulles  
Director

O/DCI/[ ]:dd 30 September 1958

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STATINTL  
(EXECUTIVE REGISTRY) FILE

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Dulles

Stan Grogan recommends that you decline. Tentative outline for the keynote speech calls for the speaker to touch on problems arising "from our vacillating foreign policy, our lack of a controlled system of propaganda, and our image as the wealthy, vier nation, etc." This is in effect asking you to be critical of the U. S. Government's propaganda activities.

AAE

25 Sept 58

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STATINTL

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101  
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VASSAR POLITICAL ASSOCIATION

VASSAR COLLEGE  
POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK

Executive Registry

10-6992

September 6, 1958

Mr. Allen W. Dulles  
2430 E Street, N.W.  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dulles:

As Vice-President of the Vassar Political Association and Chairman of its Conference Committee, I am writing to invite you to be the keynote speaker at our 1958 conference entitled "Are We Losing the Propaganda War?". Our Political Association is a non-partisan organization to which every Vassar student belongs and its conference, the only conference entirely sponsored and run by the students, is one of the major attractions of the school year. I have enclosed our tentative conference outline and I hope you will be interested in our subject and our aims.

I realize that you are an extremely busy person and probably have a fairly full schedule for the coming Fall. Nevertheless, I am writing to you in the hope that you will be able to speak at Vassar on the evening of December 5, 1958, for with your experience and understanding of world affairs, I know you would be able to give the conference the send-off it needs to be a truly educational and enjoyable success. Should you be able to give our keynote address on "What is our propaganda and what effect does it have on our position in the world?", more material concerning the issues and questions we hope you would want to include in your speech will be mailed to you in October. We very much hope you will join us at Vassar on December 5, 1958 and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

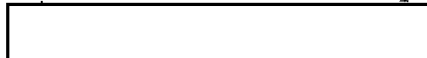
Sincerely,

*Joan Burdett*

(Miss) Joan Burdett,  
Chairman

Enclosure.

Home address: until Sept. 15.



STATOTHR

The Political Association of Vassar College plans to hold a conference next December 5 and 6, 1958, entitled "Are We Losing the Propaganda War?" The Conference Committee has chosen this subject because of its vital interest to every American citizen, especially in view of recent events. The Committee hopes that the conference will reveal not only the nature and purpose of our propaganda, but also the conflicts of our propaganda system with our foreign policy and our reputation. We feel that the security of our country depends on our reputation and prestige nearly as much as on our military strength. And we feel that our reputation and prestige depend in turn on our propaganda and foreign policy.

As President Eisenhower said in his speech to the People-to-People Committee, September 11, 1956:

Every bomb we can manufacture, every plane, every ship, every gun, in the long run has no purpose other than negative: to give us time to prevent the other fellow from starting a war, since we know we won't.

The billions we pour into that should be supported by a great American effort, a positive constructive effort that leads directly to what we all want: a true and lasting peace.

If we are going to take advantage of the assumption that all people want peace, then the problem is for people to get together and to leap governments ... to work out not one method but thousands of methods by which people can gradually learn a little bit more of each other.

The problems are: How do we dispel ignorance? How do we present our own case? How do we strengthen friendships? How do we learn of others? These are the problems.

The conference will concentrate on "how we present our own case". It will be the culmination of the Political Association's 1st semester activities which will have been geared to promoting a better understanding of our position in the world situation and of our reputation as effected by our foreign policy.

TENTATIVE OUTLINE: Conference on "Are We Losing the Propaganda War?"

Friday, December 5, 1958 4:30 PM

Movie or Panel Discussion: At this time we hope to have either a movie demonstrating how our propaganda system works or a film produced for circulation abroad by the United States Information Agency, depicting our American values and way of life. As an alternative, we might have a student panel discussion to evaluate our system of propaganda as the panel members observed it during their travels abroad or experienced its results during conversations with foreigners. Naturally foreign students studying at Vassar would also be included on this panel.

Friday, December 5, 1958 8:00 PM

Keynote Speech: As the official opening of our conference we plan to have a keynote speaker to talk on "What Is our propaganda and what effect does it have on our position in the world?" This talk will cover generally the nature and purpose of our propaganda as well as some of the problems which militate against its effectiveness. The problems might include those arising from our vacillating foreign policy, our lack of a controlled system of propaganda, and our image as the wealthy, giver nation, etc.

Saturday, December 6, 1958 9:30 AM

Panel Discussion: We plan to have a panel of experts to discuss the question "Is or should our propaganda be a tool for our foreign policy?" Some of the questions discussed by this panel might be: How can we have a coherent system of propaganda if our foreign policy vacillates? Are we, through our propaganda, creating lasting values or merely enhancing our immediate reputation? And what about Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Lebanon?

Saturday, December 6, 1958 2:30 PM

Panel Discussion: In this panel we plan to discuss the question "Are our propaganda techniques effective?". This panel's approach will be from the military-socio-economic angle. It will cover our various instruments of propaganda including our tourists, our armed forces, our private industry, and our cultural exchanges, as well as our government programs. It will also include discussion on how we might make our instruments and techniques more effective.